

UFFORD

Deben Valley Place Names

I N T R O D U C T I O N

In 1977 the Local History Council was asked to list the field and placenames of Suffolk, an enormous project no one wanted to tackle. It was decided to try a pilot scheme based on the Upper Deben Valley, and volunteer help was sought for the parishes along both banks of the river from Debenham to Eyke and Ufford, including the tributaries. The intention was to list all the names on the Tithe Maps of 1840, to explain their meanings and origins where possible, and to give their present day equivalents, with two maps, 1840 and 1981, to illustrate changes.

It seemed simple to list the names, but 140 years had elapsed since the Tithe survey. Much had happened in the countryside - Victorian High Farming, the mechanical revolution, several agricultural revolutions, two World Wars and the E.E.C. had affected farm-land - though less than some critics might believe. Aerodromes and army camps had come and gone, roads had been straightened and macadamized; bypasses, dual carriageways and motorways, and railways had cut swathes through villages and fields, isolating fragments and separating old neighbours. Power lines had hurtled crosscountry with giant strides, gas pipelines undermined the land; a forest of alien poles were stuck into the earth, a rash of housing estates had changed the village complexion irretrievably. This all had to be recorded.

The thirty researchers were and are individuals. Some know their villages with ancestral lore and a lifetime's knowledge at their fingertips, others are incomers with professional backgrounds far removed from rural Suffolk, but with keen and conscientious minds bent on investigation of their new surroundings. All have done what was required of them - and much more - but results are inevitably unequal, and it should be stated that this is no university based, computerised scientific survey by scholars, but a rescue job by a group of gifted amateurs trying to salvage the history of the landscape. Sometimes additional information was made available; notably a valuable group of ancient manuscripts, and the excitement of the chase led many workers to examine deeds, estate maps, wills and manorial extents. If every available document had been sought and used the survey would have been much fuller and richer; if every researcher had been equally skilled in

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ancient languages, palaeography and diplomatic the interpretations would be more exact and scholarly, but to work at such depth and detail in even one village would take a lifetime, and most workers no longer have a lifetime left. So this survey has shortcomings of which the editors are fully aware; their hope is that better and younger scholars may be inspired to complete and correct what has been so well begun.

The Editors would like to record their thanks to the following:

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